

2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Customer Focus—

Claycreek Farm is a 206-cow, 670-acre dairy farm operated by brothers Jim and Pete Richards, the second generation to run the farm. Partnering EQIP with other available funds and labor has successfully eased their transition from a strictly conventional dairy to a grazing system. Jim and Pete received EQIP cost share in 1997 to install fencing for rotation grazing, pipeline, troughs, pasture and hayland planting, use exclusion, riparian buffer, and nutrient management to protect water quality on the Hubbardton River. "I feel that EQIP is fair and an asset to farmers and taxpayers," says Jim. He believes farmers have always been environmentally sensitive, and EQIP allows them to protect a variety of natural resources. "As with the current economic conditions of agriculture, we would never have been able to (economically) justify fencing livestock from the river."

Jim wishes he had before-and-after photos to show the improvements made on their farm using EQIP dollars. "USDA, NRCS has assisted our farm in the ranking process by leveraging the cost of the riparian buffer practice using partnerships, such as The Nature Conservancy, Correctional Center (labor from the Community Restitutions Program), Conservation Reserve Program, and Partners for Fish and Wildlife. The NRCS staff brought the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to my farm, and I used their program to fund the fencing along the river. This reduced the overall cost-share requested from EQIP and improved my ranking for receiving the funds in 1997."

In addition to the EQIP contract, the Richards also signed a 20-year contract through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to protect the riparian buffer, further ensuring a long-term commitment to protecting the Hubbardton River.

Vermont Summary

Overview

Vermont has had overwhelming Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) interest since 1997. This year alone, 106 landowners applied for funding, which totaled over \$4.2 million. Vermont's Department of Agriculture and Conservation Districts leveraged just under \$1 million additional funding.

Accomplishments

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted landowners to develop a total of 383 contracts between 1997 and 2000, which obligated over \$4 million of Federal cost-share assistance. Additionally, Vermont's Department of Agriculture and Conservation Districts leveraged over \$1.7 million towards EQIP contracts during this time.

Outlook

Protection of water quality for our future generation is well accepted in Vermont, and additional funding through EQIP and partnerships would ensure the taxpayers that farmers would continue to protect these precious resources (water quality and wildlife habitat).

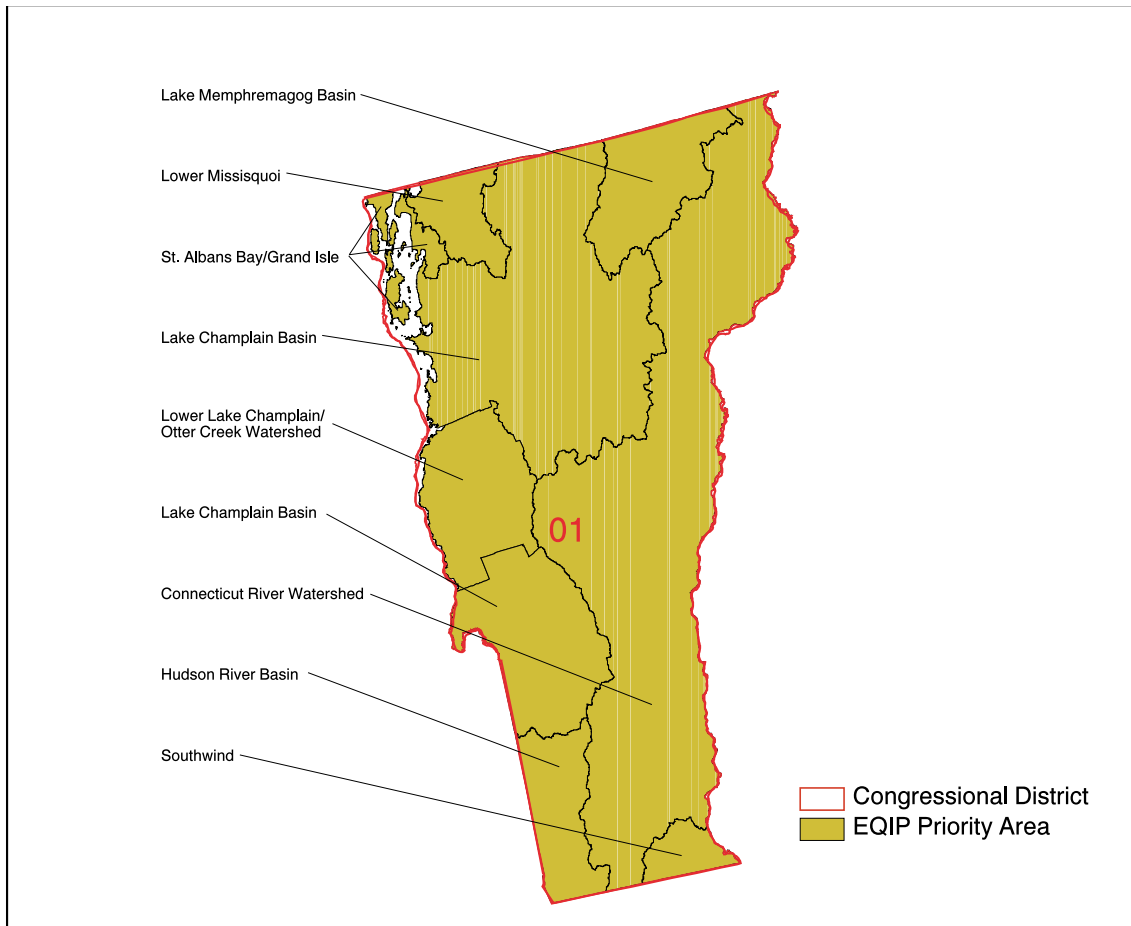
State Contact

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Jim Richards of the Claycreek Farm in Rutland County believes nutrient management has been beneficial to him and his brother Pete and has taught them how to protect the water quality on their farm. "I held a farm tour with great pride of our environmental accomplishments," Jim added.



Vermont EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional District



Vermont EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Congressional District	Fiscal Year 2000		Cumulative Total (97-00)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$874,297	86	\$4,364,939	513
State Totals	\$874,297	86	\$4,364,939	513

Note: EQIP contracts for each Congressional District are estimated from Conservation Priority Areas which may include more than one district. Congressional District 0 = EQIP Contracts for Statewide Natural Resource Concerns which can be in any Congressional District in the state.

Source: FSA Recordset type01, data through 4th quarter FY2000

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